

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

34030

ACTION

October 28, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT:

Soviet UN Resolution on World Disarmament
Conference

Under Secretary Irwin has authorized our UN delegation to work with the Soviet UN delegation on the amended version of the Soviet resolution calling for a World Disarmament Conference in 1972. The Soviets have inquired whether we might co-sponsor the resolution, but the Under Secretary's instructions rule out co-sponsoring. Rather, we would make a number of changes to show that we were "cooperative and flexible" in our approach to the Soviet proposal and to participation by the PRC in future disarmament discussion. The proposed State/ACDA approach would "minimize" any appearance that the US was aligning itself in a tactical ploy against China, and keep open maximum range of options by obscuring questions of timing nature, etc.

Nevertheless, there can be some problems with this approach. First of all, the item is meaningless if judged on its merits. More serious, however, is the obvious anti-Chinese bent of the Soviet move (even though it originated before your first Peking trip). As it now stands the resolution would refer to the "special responsibility" of all nuclear weapons powers for the solution of nuclear disarmament (this, of course, the Chinese reject) and set up a Conference without allowing the Chinese any say in the matter.

On the other hand, a resolution in some form along Soviet lines, is bound to carry with a large vote, as these items always do. It will be turned over to the CCD. If we remain totally aloof, we may be confronted with a more serious problem than if we try to soften the language and commitments. At the same time, refusing to have anything to do with this project is a signal to the Soviets of our concern not to offend Peking. Thus, we will end up leaning one way or the other toward Moscow or Peking.

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Secretary Rogers is on record at the UN to the effect that we are skeptical of the project and prefer not to create new machinery.

John Holdridge feels that the China implications indicate we should not cooperate on the resolution and should abstain.

Marshall Wright and I see no advantage in simply sitting idle, and thus permitting the passage of a resolution that is likely to be totally unacceptable to us. Thus, we are not attracted to the idea of abstaining (and even less to voting against a disarmament resolution sure to command a large majority). We, therefore, think we should make the effort to insure a final version that we can live with and vote for. In addition to the Irwin proposals, we should also amend the clause on the "special responsibility" of "all nuclear powers," thus making the resolution more palatable, or at least less objectionable, to China.

RECOMMENDATION

That you concur in Irwin's instructions, plus the further amendment noted above. (Tab A).

Approve Irwin's instructions _____

(Sonnenfeldt will notify ACDA) _____

Disapprove _____

Other _____





DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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October 26, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Soviet Draft United Nations General
Assembly Resolution on a World
Disarmament Conference

The Under Secretary has authorized our delegation to the United Nations General Assembly to propose amendments to a resolution introduced by the Soviets which "deems desirable that agreement should be reached among States before the end of 1972 on an actual date for the convening of a World Disarmament Conference and on its agenda." We would offer to support this resolution provided it is amended to avoid a specific commitment by the General Assembly to such a conference and to avoid any implication of agreement to still more disarmament machinery outside the United Nations framework.

The enclosed paper sets forth in more detail the rationale for this course of action and the amendments we desire in the Soviet resolution.

fn *Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.*
Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Paper regarding the Soviet
Resolution on a World
Disarmament Conference

Soviet Draft United Nations General Assembly
Resolution on a World Disarmament Conference

The Soviet draft resolution regarding a World Disarmament Conference, which Gromyko presented to the General Assembly on September 28, could come up for debate in the Assembly as early as November 1.

The Soviets appear to be more interested in getting credit for their World Disarmament Conference proposal than in pressing for early convening of a conference. However, their draft resolution, if adopted, would place the General Assembly on record in favor of a World Disarmament Conference and would provide that agreement to convene the Conference should be reached before the end of 1972.

The Soviet proposal is designed in some measure to take the play away from the Peoples Republic of China. At the same time, it leaves open an avenue for participation by the Peoples Republic of China in disarmament talks. The Peoples Republic flatly refused the Soviet proposal for a five-power conference of nuclear powers. The position of the Peoples Republic was that nuclear disarmament should only be discussed at a world conference of all countries at the summit level. The Soviet draft resolution would counter the position of the Peoples Republic by making less explicit the suggestion for a World Disarmament Conference and avoiding the implication that the conference would be an alternative to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

Our western allies have doubts about the Soviet proposal but most could probably be expected to vote in its favor. Non-aligned countries have so far indicated little interest in a World Disarmament Conference but will almost certainly be prepared to vote for the resolution.

As a practical matter we have a choice between abstaining on the resolution, knowing it will pass with an overwhelming majority, or seeking to get it amended into a more acceptable form which we could support.

The Soviets have asked if we could co-sponsor the resolution and have indicated some willingness to consider our suggestions for amendment. In view of our skepticism regarding the value of a World Disarmament Conference in terms of producing specific accomplishments, we would not co-sponsor the resolution. But if we can get changes which avoid a specific commitment by the General Assembly to a conference and do not imply our moving toward still more disarmament machinery outside the United Nations framework, we would have a resolution we should be able to support.

Our proposed amendments would show that we were prepared to be cooperative and flexible in our approach to the Soviet proposal and to participation by the Peoples Republic of China in future disarmament discussions. They would also minimize any appearance that the United States is aligning itself in a tactical ploy against the Peoples Republic of China and they would keep open the maximum range of options for future decision by obscuring the questions of the timing, nature, and venue of any future world conference.

